ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM): Yes, Sir.

(b) The Atomic Energy (Control of Irradiation of Food) Rules, 1990 have already been published in the Gazette of India dated March 2, 1991 for the control of food irradiation. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare are in the process of notifying the amendments to the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955 in order to enable domestic consumption of irradiated food.

Manufacture of LAB

1442. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of licences/promoters who have applied for permission to manufacture linear alkyl benzene (LAB) from the kerosene stage with names of the units;

(b) whether Government have taken any decision on the issue; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI CHINTA MOHAN): (a) After the liberalisation of industrial licensing policy in July, 1991, Linear Alkyl Benzene (LAB) is exempt from the licensing provisions. The promoters are free to manufacture LAB from either kerosene or some other stage. No permission is required in this regard.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Shortage of Life Saving Drugs

1443. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is acute shortage of life saving drugs like GARDINAL SODIUM, METHOTREXATE, DIOGOXIN PG etc. for the last two weeks is reported in the Hindustan Times dated 16th June, 1992;

(b) whether Government are also aware that recent hike in the price of raw material imported for manufacture of these drugs is responsible for raising drug prices as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 24th June, 1992; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken so far to bring down the prices of such life saving drugs like anti-cancer, anti-epilepsy and anti-tuberculosin etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS & FERTILIZERS (SHRI CHINTA MOHAN): (a) The position of the reported shortages has been analysed. Most of the shortages so reported are of specific brands and of medicines having low turn-over. In most such cases, equivalent medicines are available in other brands or generic name. In case of Vitamin C, there were problems in regard to pricing of bulk drug and formulations which have since been tackled and the situation should normalise soon.

(b) In a situation of rising costs of inputs, certain amount of increase in prices is inevitable. The increase is relatively higher in those drugs

where import content is high because of exchange rate adjustment and requirement of foreign exchange at market determined rates.

(c) Import duty on identified bulk drugs and intermediates has been reduced. In some drugs and formulations, imports have been permitted at official exchange rate. These measures are expected to tackle the above situation substantially.

Closure of Fertilizer Units

1444. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of fertilizer plants in the public, joint or private sector have lately been closed or are on point of closure;

(b) if so, which of the fertilizer plants are sick and on brink of closure and which ones have closed down during the last one year, alongwith the reasons for closure plant-wise; and

(c) the number of employees and workers thrown out of employment of facing joblessness?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI CHINTA MOHAN): (a) and (b) As on 31st May, 1992, about 41 plants in the private sector, producing single super phosphate (SSP) as shown in the Statement (*see* below), are reported to be temporarily closed. These plants are reported to be having liquidity problems caused by delays in the revision of subsidy taking into account cost escalations, arising out of increase in the cost of raw materials.

(c) While precise information on this subject is not readily available, roughly about 400 persons are employed in each standard-size integrated plant producing SSP and about 50 in each small scale plant.

Statement

SSP PRODUCTION STOPPED AS ON 31ST MAY, 1992

(A) *MAIN PLANTS*

1. Agro Chem, Punjab, Singhpura, Dera Bassi (Punjab)
2. Anil Starch Products, Bhavnagar (Gujarat)
3. Assam State Fert. & Chemicals, Chandrapur (Assam)
4. Bharat Fertiliser Industries, Kharivali Unit—II (Maharashtra)
   —do— Unit-III (Maharashtra)
5. East Coast Fertilisers & Chemicals, Kalmo (Orissa)
6. Indag Products, Cuddalore (Tamil Nadu)
7. Jayshree Chemicals & Fert.; Pataudi (Haryana)
8. Krishna Industrial Corpn.; Nidadavole (Andhra Pradesh)
9. Mittal Fertilisers, Rae Bareilly (U.P.)
10. Rama Krishi Rasayan, Loni Kalbhor (Maharashtra)
11. Shaw Wallace & Co.; Avadi (Tamil Nadu)
12. Sri Durga Bansal Fertilisers, Faizabad (U.P.)
13. Trimurtee Fertilisers, Kanpur Dehat (U.P.)
14. Unialkem Fert., Raisen (Madhya Pradesh)

SSI UNITS

15. Awadh Fertilizers, Bahraich (U.P.)
16. Brij Fertilisers, Shikohabad (UP)